




UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY 3 1999

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: National Remedy Review Board Recommendations for the Li Tungsten/Captain's Cove Superfund Site

FROM: Bruce K. Means, Chair
National Remedy Review Board 

TO: Richard L. Caspe, Director
Emergency and Remedial Response Division
EPA Region 2

Purpose

The National Remedy Review Board (NRRB) has completed its review of the proposed remedial action for the Li Tungsten/Captain's Cove Superfund Site in Glen Cove, New York. This memorandum documents the NRRB's advisory recommendations.

Context for NRRB Review

As you recall, the Administrator announced the NRRB as one of the October 1995 Superfund Administrative Reforms to help control response costs and promote consistent and cost-effective decisions. The NRRB furthers these goals by providing a cross-regional, management-level, "real time" review of high cost proposed response actions. The board reviews all proposed cleanup actions that exceed its established cost-based review criteria.

The NRRB review evaluates the proposed actions for consistency with the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) and relevant superfund policy and guidance. It focuses on the nature and complexity of the site; health and environmental risks; the range of alternatives that address site risks; the quality and reasonableness of the cost estimates for alternatives; regional, state/tribal, and other stakeholder opinions on the proposed actions, and any other relevant factors.

Generally, the NRRB makes "advisory recommendations" to the appropriate regional decision maker before the region issues the proposed response action for public comment. The region will then include these recommendations in the Administrative Record for the site. While the region is expected to give the board's recommendations substantial weight, other important factors, such as subsequent public comment or technical analyses of response options, may

-- pre-decisional; not for distribution --

influence the final regional decision. It is important to remember that the NRRB does not change the Agency's current delegations or alter in any way the public's role in site decisions.

NRRB Advisory Recommendations

The NRRB reviewed the informational package for the proposed remedial actions (operable units #1 and #2) at the Li Tungsten/Captain's Cove Superfund Site and discussed related issues with EPA project manager Ed Als on March 9 and 10, 1999. Based on this review and discussion, the NRRB offers the following comments.

- It is important to note that the region inadvertently did not offer the site's Community Advisory Group (CAG) an opportunity to provide the board with written comments or concerns regarding remedy selection issues for its consideration in this review. The board strongly recommends that the region continue its close working relationship with the CAG and other community groups in the area in developing its preferred alternatives and in determining its final remediation strategy for these operable units.
- Given the ongoing state-lead cleanups at neighboring contaminated sites, the board notes that cost effective response actions for the Li Tungsten/Captain's Cove operable units depend heavily on careful coordination with the state. EPA and the state should take care to determine area-specific remediation strategies that are consistent, especially with regard to future land use assumptions and remedial action objectives.
- Based on the material presented, the board identified several concerns regarding the proposed preliminary remediation goals (PRGs):
 - (1) Given the expected land use for the areas to be addressed, the PRGs appear to be overly conservative and thus may drive up cleanup costs unnecessarily (e.g., PRGs for the area identified as parcel A appear more conservative than necessary to protect future "construction workers," while certain PRGs for parcels B, C, C', and Captain's Cove at "background" levels appear more conservative than necessary to protect for the future commercial use of these areas). Further, based on EPA experience at other sites, the PRGs specified for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) may be below background levels for this site. The region should clarify how the proposed PRGs were derived, and how they are consistent with remedial action objectives.
 - (2) Based on the materials presented, it is possible that certain New York State Department of Environmental Conservation "technical assistance guidance memoranda" (TAGM) levels proposed as soil PRGs were based on the protection of groundwater. If so, the board questions whether this is necessary given the location of the site, the areas these PRGs are to address, and the fact that the groundwater in certain of these areas may not be potable.
- The materials presented to the board included an alternative (LS-4) that employs electrokinetic treatment technology. Based on the site review package, LS-4 represents a less expensive cleanup approach that may be effective in addressing certain types of metals in soils. However, the board also notes that this technology may be limited in its ability to address the particular types and levels of contaminants of concern at this site. In any case, the board recommends that the region more clearly explain why it prefers alternative LS-3 over the less expensive alternative LS-4 in the site decision documents.

-- pre-decisional; not, for distribution --

In doing so, the Region should consider the EPA publication "Electrokinetic Laboratory and Field Processes Applicable to Radioactive and Hazardous Mixed Waste In Soil and Groundwater" (EPA 402-R-97-006; July 1997).

- The board notes that the information presented on the range of groundwater remediation alternatives (including the preferred alternative) did not clearly explain how each would achieve remediation goals in a reasonable time frame. The region should clarify its strategy for addressing groundwater in the proposed plan and ROD.
- The information presented to the board regarding the operation and maintenance costs associated with the preferred ground water alternatives (CW-1 and LW-3) appears incomplete. The region should clarify in the site decision documents the adjusted cost estimates for the preferred groundwater alternatives, including appropriate costs associated with the neighboring Mattiace treatment plant, which is to be utilized for the treatment of Li Tungsten ground water.
- The board notes that the region did not evaluate in detail lower cost alternatives that would manage waste on site. It recommends that the region explain in the proposed plan why alternatives such as on-site containment, or stabilization with on-site disposal were not more fully considered.

The NRRB appreciates the region's efforts to work closely with the state and community groups at this site. The board members also express their appreciation to the region for its participation in the review process. We encourage Region 2 management and staff to work with their regional NRRB representative and the Region 2/6 Accelerated Response Center in the Office of Emergency and Remedial Response to discuss any appropriate follow-up actions.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call if you have any questions at 703-603-8815.

cc: S. Luftig
T. Fields
B. Breen
J. Woolford
C. Hooks
R. Hall
OERR Center Directors

-- pre-decisional; not for distribution --